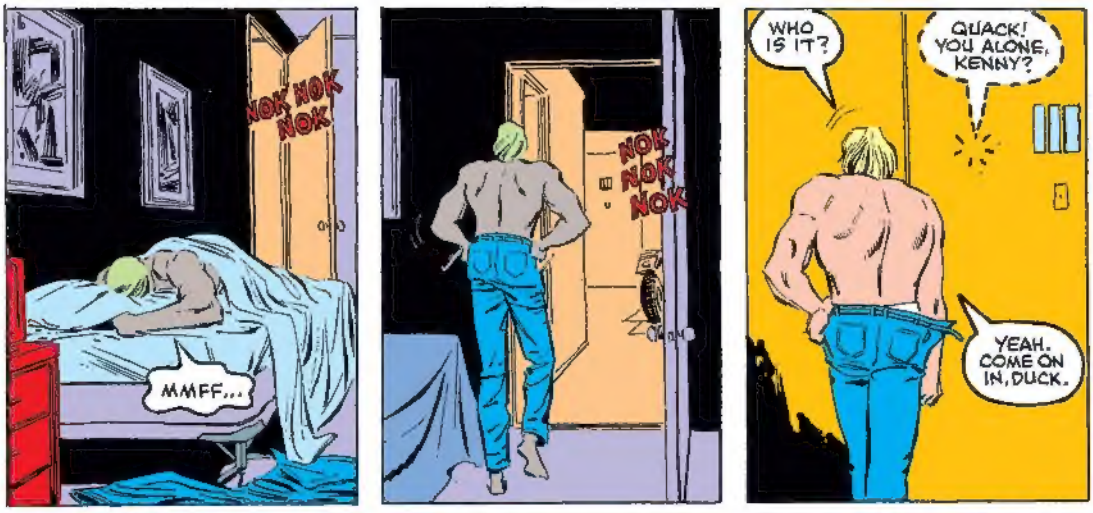
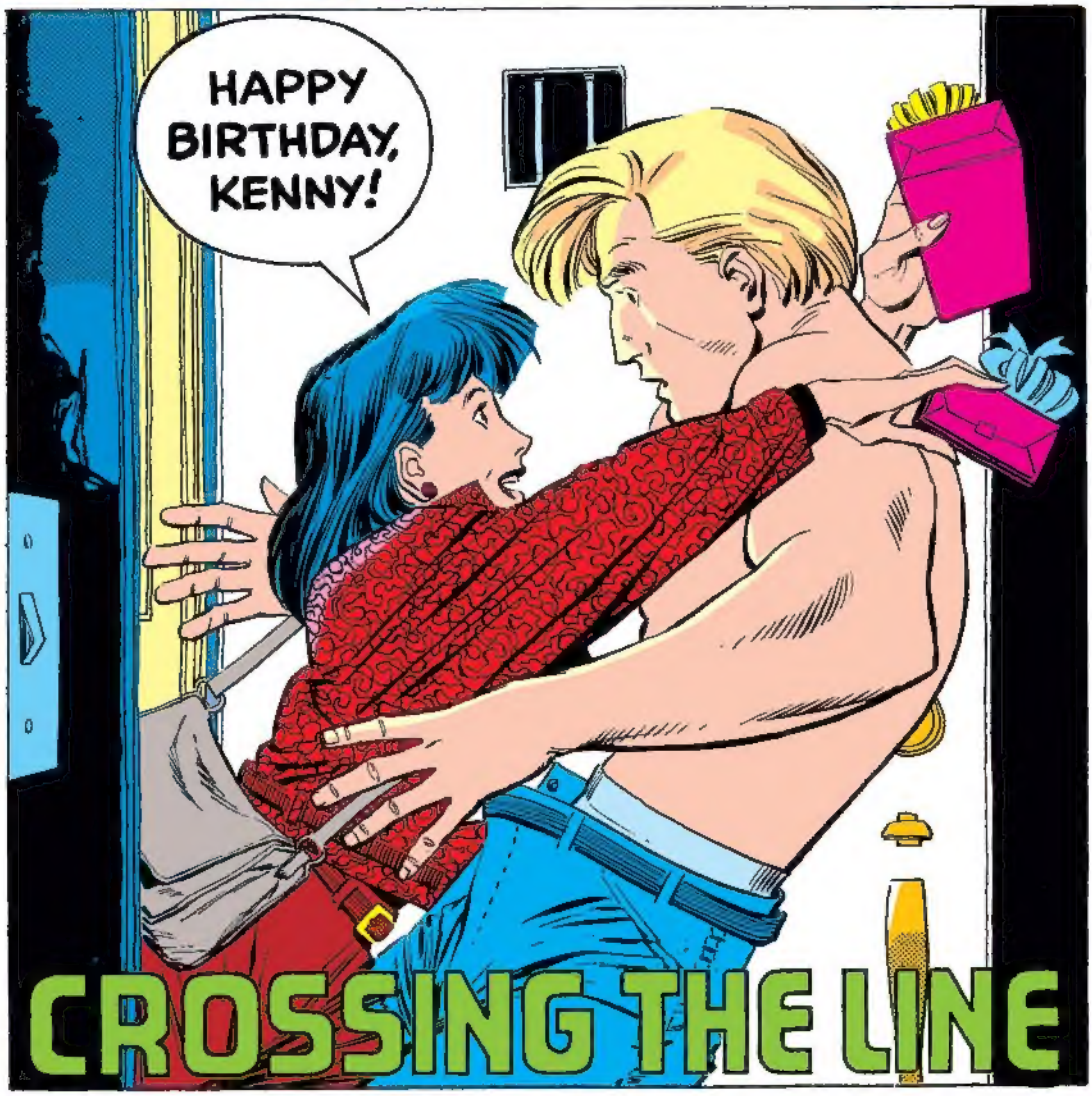
MARVEL
75¢ US
95¢ CAN
5 FEB
02140
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
new universe™
STAR BRAND™





CROSSING THE LINE

JIM SHOOTER
SCRIPT

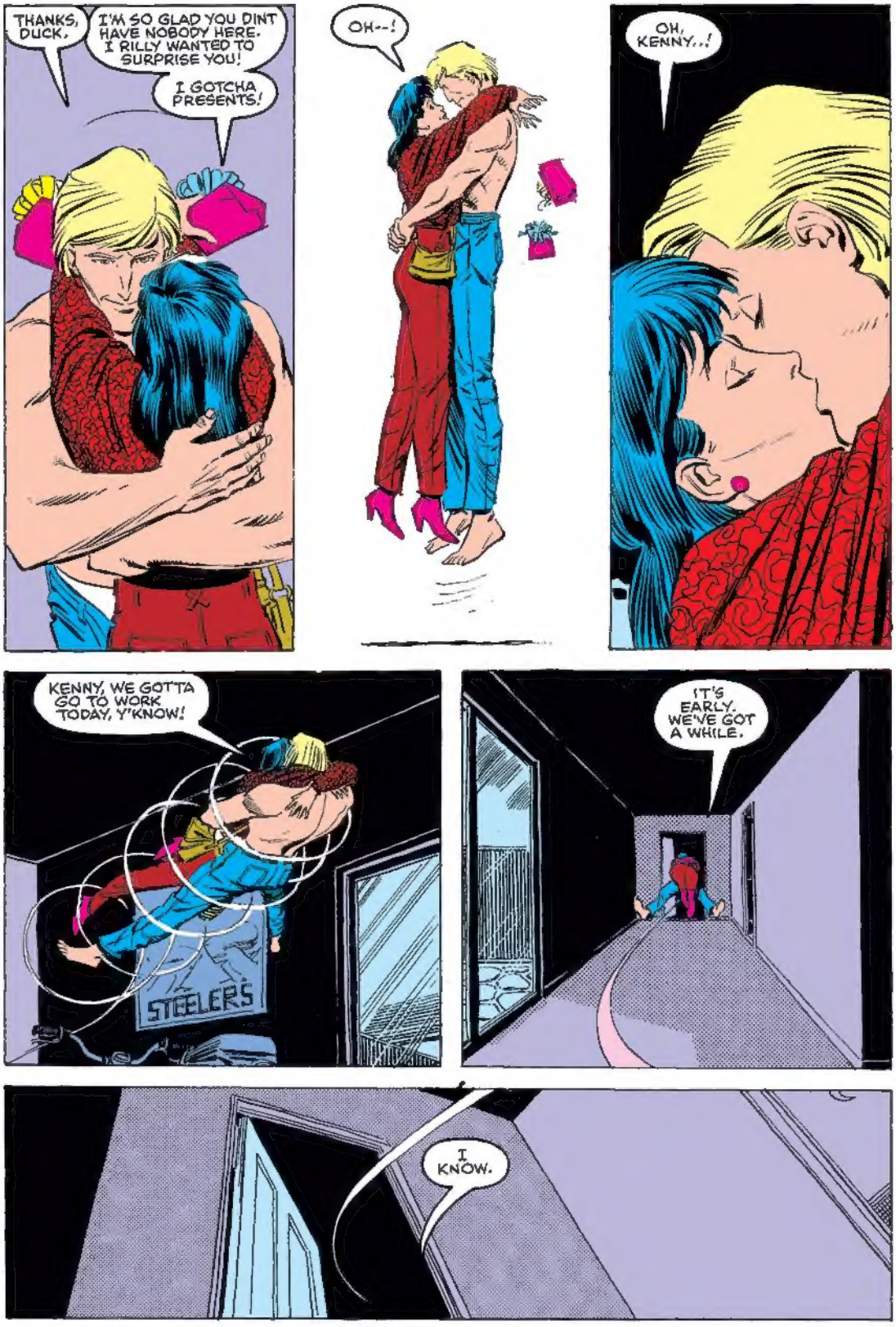
JOHN ROMITA, JR.
PENCILS

AL WILLIAMSON
INKS

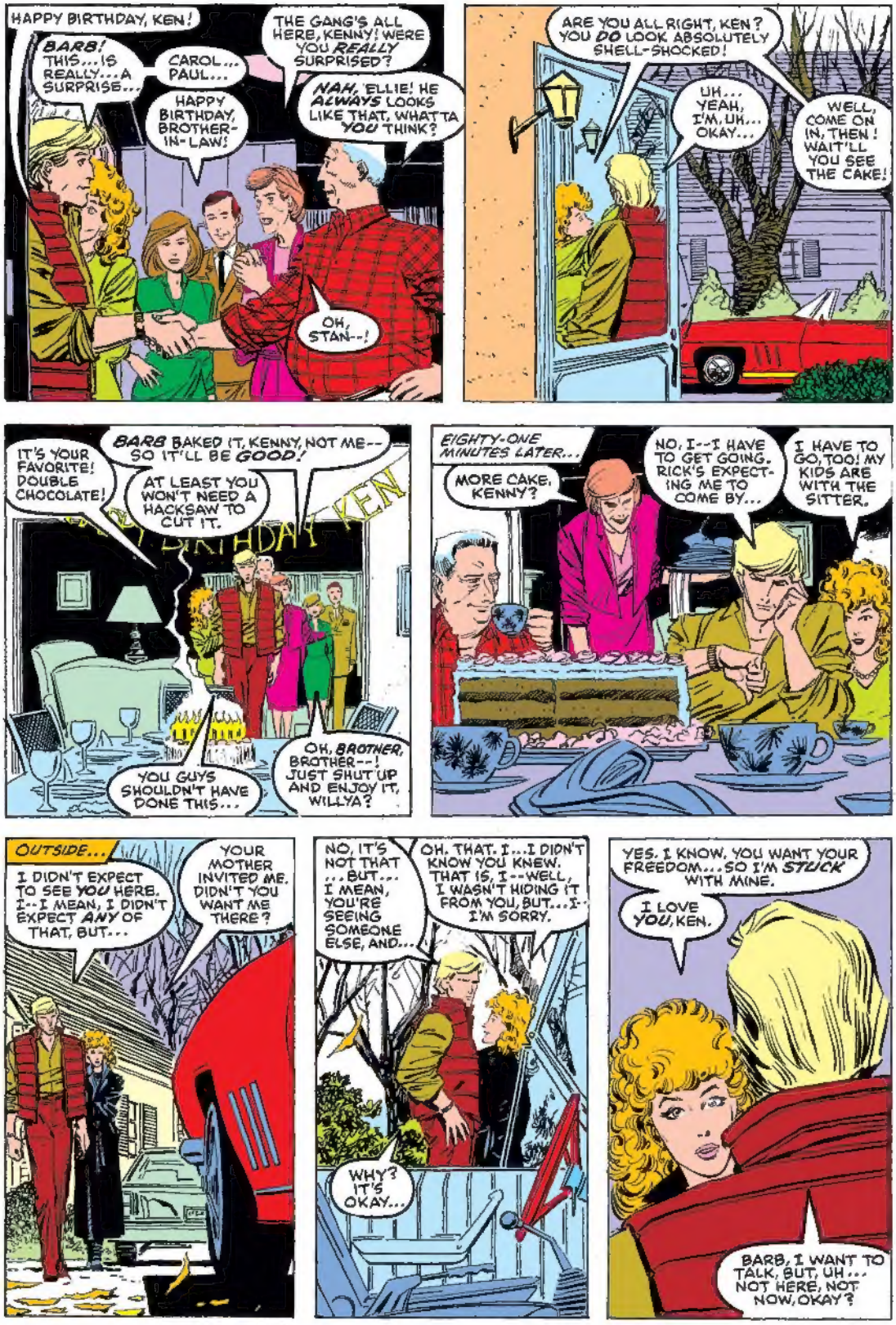
JOE ROSEN
LETTERS

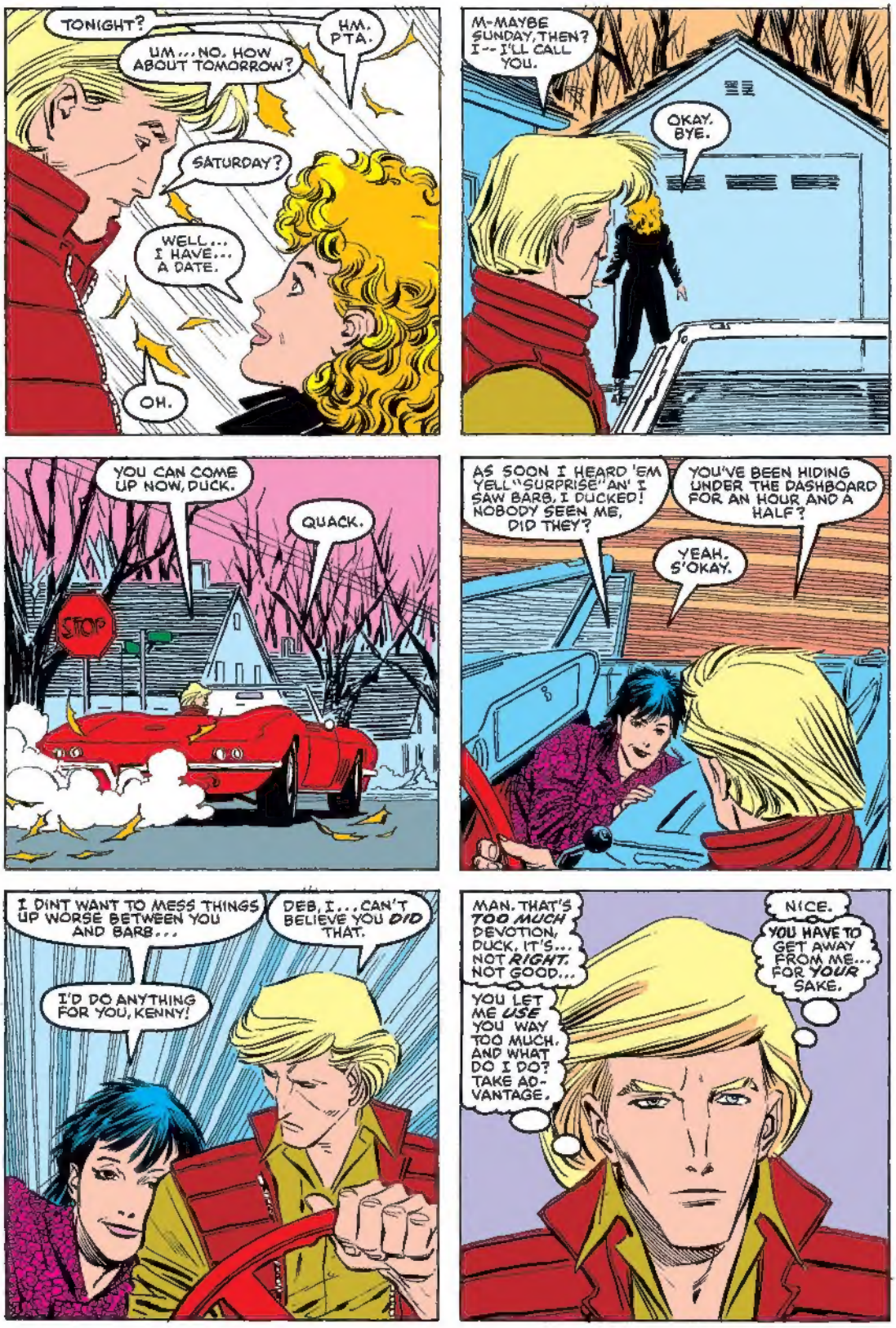
JANET JACKSON
COLORS

MICHAEL HIGGINS
EDITING

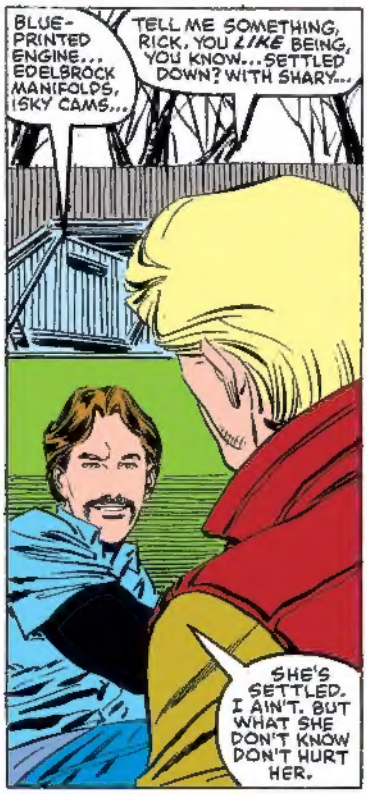

THANKS, DUCK.
I'M SO GLAD YOU DINT HAVE NOBODY HERE. I RILLY WANTED TO SURPRISE YOU!
I GOTCHA PRESENTS!
OH--!
OH, KENNY..!
KENNY, WE GOTTA GO TO WORK TODAY, Y'KNOW!
STEELERS
IT'S EARLY. WE'VE GOT A WHILE.
I KNOW.

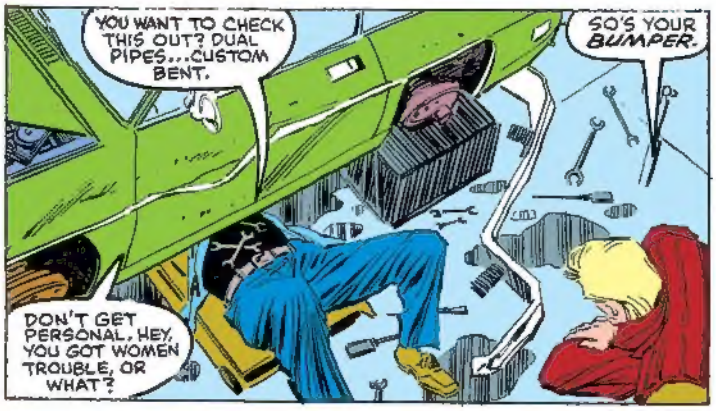
LATER...
SEE? THEY'RE FOR NAVIGATING WHEN YOU FLY! A COMPASS AND A FLASHLIGHT SO'S YOU CAN READ IT AT NIGHT!
THESE'LL COME IN HANDY, DUCK. THANKS.
WHAT'SA' MATTER, KENNY? DON'TCHA LIKE 'EM? YOU LOOK KINDA DOWN.
NO, THEY'RE GREAT. I...
I JUST HAVE A LOT ON MY MIND.
IS IT.. BARB?
I THINK IT'S...ALL OVER WITH HER, DUCK. SHE'S SEEING ANOTHER GUY, HUH. WHY SHOULDN'T SHE?
I REALLY BLEW IT, DUCK.
ANYWAY...YOU WANT TO COME OVER TO RICK'S WITH ME TONIGHT? I'LL PICK YOU UP AFTER WORK.
NINE AND A HALF HOURS LATER...
GEEZ, KENNY, I THOUGHT YOU MEANT RICK FROM WORK!
NO, RICK LAWSON. HE AND SHARY MOVED OUT TO MCMURRAY. RENTED A HOUSE. ASKED ME OVER TO SEE IT.
GEEZ, I HOPE THEY'RE NOT THROWING A SURPRISE PARTY FOR ME.
HEY, KENNY--ISN'T THIS YOUR MOM AN' DAD'S HOUSE? WHY WE STOPPIN' HERE?
JUST HAVE TO PICK SOMETHING UP. ELLIE CALLED ME AT WORK--SAID A LETTER CAME TODAY ADDRESSED TO, ME FROM THE DRAFT BOARD.
IT'S PROBABLY JUST A MISTAKE, BUT ELLIE'S THE NERVOUS TYPE, YOU KNOW...
CAN I WAIT IN THE CAR, KENNY? I--I DON'T THINK YOUR MOTHER LIKES ME.
SHE ONLY MET YOU ONCE, DUCK.
YEAH, BUT I COULD TELL SHE DINT THINK I WAS... I DUNNO...GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU OR SOM'THIN.
SO STAY PUT. I'LL ONLY BE A SECOND.
SURPRISE!
OH, NO...

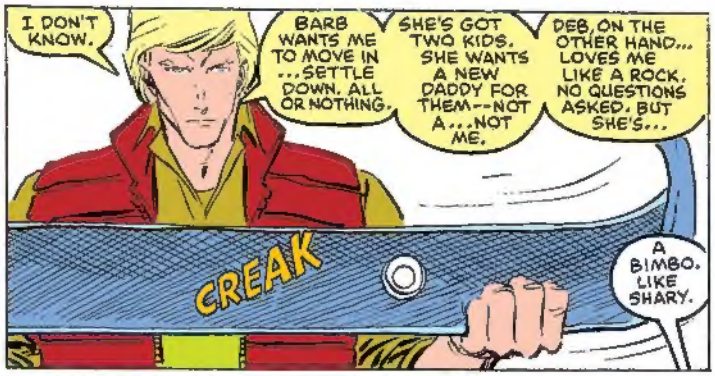

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, KEN!
BARB! THIS...IS REALLY...A SURPRISE...
CAROL... PAUL...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BROTHER-IN-LAW!
THE GANG'S ALL HERE, KENNY! WERE YOU REALLY SURPRISED?
NAH, ELLIE! HE ALWAYS LOOKS LIKE THAT, WHAT'TA YOU THINK?
OH, STAN--!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, KEN? YOU DO LOOK ABSOLUTELY SHELL-SHOCKED!
UH... YEAH, I'M, UH... OKAY...
WELL, COME ON IN, THEN! WAIT'LL YOU SEE THE CAKE!
IT'S YOUR FAVORITE! DOUBLE CHOCOLATE!
BARB BAKED IT, KENNY, NOT ME--SO IT'LL BE GOOD!
AT LEAST YOU WON'T NEED A HACKSAW TO CUT IT.
YOU GUYS SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THIS...
OH, BROTHER, BROTHER--! JUST SHUT UP AND ENJOY IT, WILLYA?
EIGHTY-ONE MINUTES LATER...
MORE CAKE, KENNY?
NO, I--I HAVE TO GET GOING. RICK'S EXPECTING ME TO COME BY...
I HAVE TO GO, TOO! MY KIDS ARE WITH THE SITTER.
OUTSIDE...
I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU HERE. I--I MEAN, I DIDN'T EXPECT ANY OF THAT, BUT...
YOUR MOTHER INVITED ME. DIDN'T YOU WANT ME THERE?
NO, IT'S NOT THAT ...BUT... I MEAN, YOU'RE SEEING SOMEONE ELSE, AND...
OH. THAT. I...I DIDN'T KNOW YOU KNEW. THAT IS, I--WELL, I WASN'T HIDING IT FROM YOU, BUT...I--I'M SORRY.
WHY? IT'S OKAY...
YES. I KNOW. YOU WANT YOUR FREEDOM...SO I'M STUCK WITH MINE.
I LOVE YOU, KEN.
BARB, I WANT TO TALK, BUT, UH... NOT HERE, NOT NOW, OKAY?


TONIGHT?
UM... NO. HOW ABOUT TOMORROW?
HM. PTA.
SATURDAY?
WELL... I HAVE... A DATE.
OH.
M-MAYBE SUNDAY, THEN? I-- I'LL CALL YOU.
OKAY. BYE.
YOU CAN COME UP NOW, DUCK.
QUACK.
STOP
AS SOON I HEARD 'EM YELL "SURPRISE" AN' I SAW BARB, I DUCKED! NOBODY SEEN ME, DID THEY?
YOU'VE BEEN HIDING UNDER THE DASHBOARD FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF?
YEAH, S'OKAY.
I DINT WANT TO MESS THINGS UP WORSE BETWEEN YOU AND BARB...
DEB, I... CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID THAT.
I'D DO ANYTHING FOR YOU, KENNY!
MAN. THAT'S TOO MUCH DEVOTION, DUCK. IT'S... NOT RIGHT. NOT GOOD...
YOU LET ME USE YOU WAY TOO MUCH. AND WHAT DO I DO? TAKE AD-VANTAGE.
NICE.
YOU HAVE TO GET AWAY FROM ME... FOR YOUR SAKE.

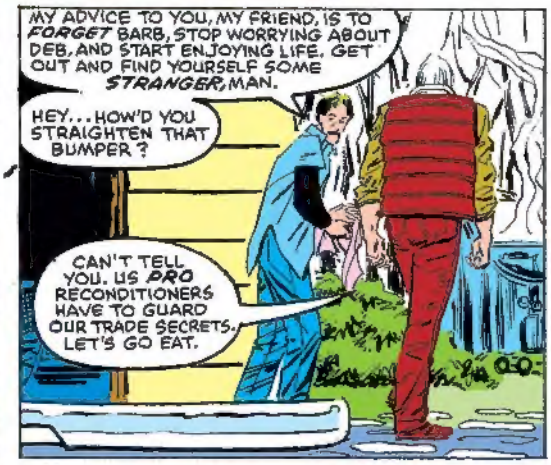
SOON...
...I JUST GOT MINE CUT. IT WAS PUNKY AND SPIKY BEFORE BUT I SORT'A GOT TIRED OF IT, SHARY...
I JUST GET MINE PERMED, AND BLEACHED.
GONNA BE A NICE SET OF WHEELS WHEN I FINISH IT.
YEAH. SURE IS, RICK.

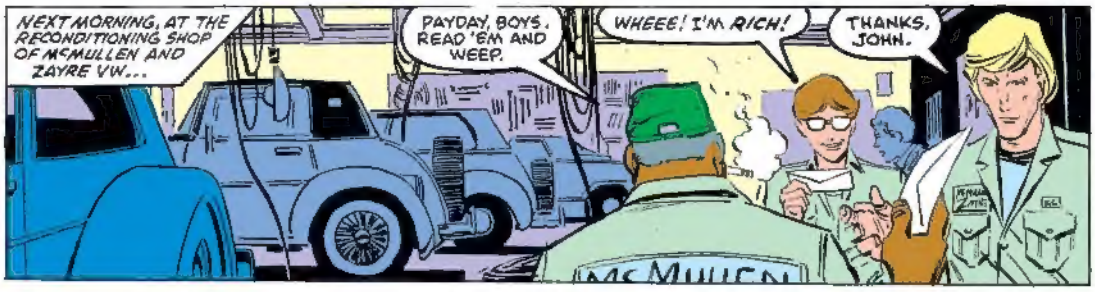

BLUE-PRINTED ENGINE... EDELBROCK MANIFOLDS, ISKY CAMS...
TELL ME SOMETHING, RICK. YOU *LIKE* BEING, YOU KNOW...SETTLED DOWN? WITH SHARY...
SHE'S SETTLED. I AIN'T. BUT WHAT SHE DON'T KNOW DON'T HURT HER.

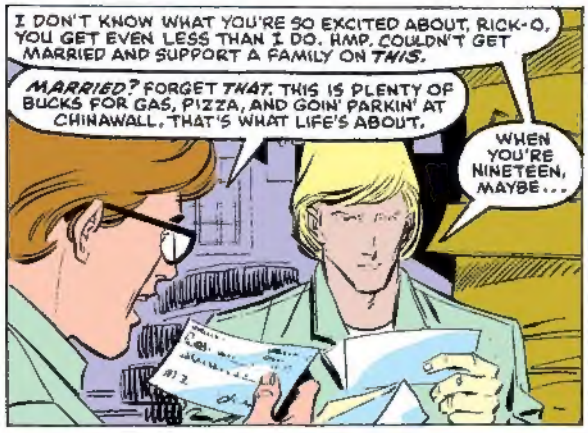

YOU WANT TO CHECK THIS OUT? DUAL PIPES...CUSTOM BENT.
SO'S YOUR *BUMPER*.
DON'T GET PERSONAL. HEY, YOU GOT WOMEN TROUBLE, OR WHAT?

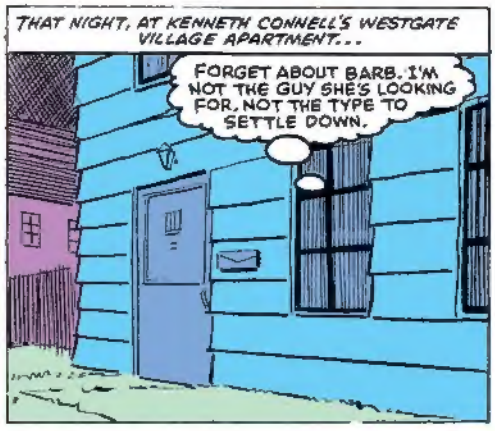

I DON'T KNOW.
BARB WANTS ME TO MOVE IN ...SETTLE DOWN. ALL OR NOTHING.
SHE'S GOT TWO KIDS. SHE WANTS A NEW DADDY FOR THEM--NOT A...NOT ME.
DEB, ON THE OTHER HAND... LOVES ME LIKE A ROCK. NO QUESTIONS ASKED. BUT SHE'S...
CREAK
A BIMBO. LIKE SHARY.

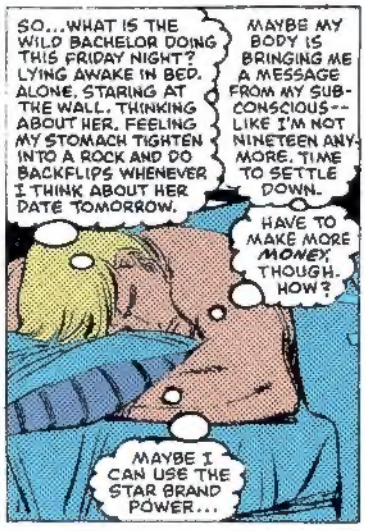
NO SHE ISN'T. I THINK SHE'S THE BEST HUMAN BEING I KNOW. NOT THE SMARTEST, MAYBE, BUT--
I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I'M *USING* HER.
WHEN SHE DON'T WANT IT NO MORE, SHE'LL *SPLIT*. SAVE THE GUILT...


MY ADVICE TO YOU, MY FRIEND, IS TO *FORGET* BARB, STOP WORRYING ABOUT DEB, AND START ENJOYING LIFE. GET OUT AND FIND YOURSELF SOME *STRANGER*, MAN.
HEY...HOW'D YOU STRAIGHTEN THAT BUMPER?
CAN'T TELL YOU. US *PRO* RECONDITIONERS HAVE TO GUARD OUR TRADE SECRETS. LET'S GO EAT.


NEXT MORNING, AT THE RECONDITIONING SHOP OF McMULLEN AND ZAYRE VW...
PAYDAY, BOYS. READ 'EM AND WEEP.
WHEEE! I'M RICH!
THANKS, JOHN.
McMULLEN

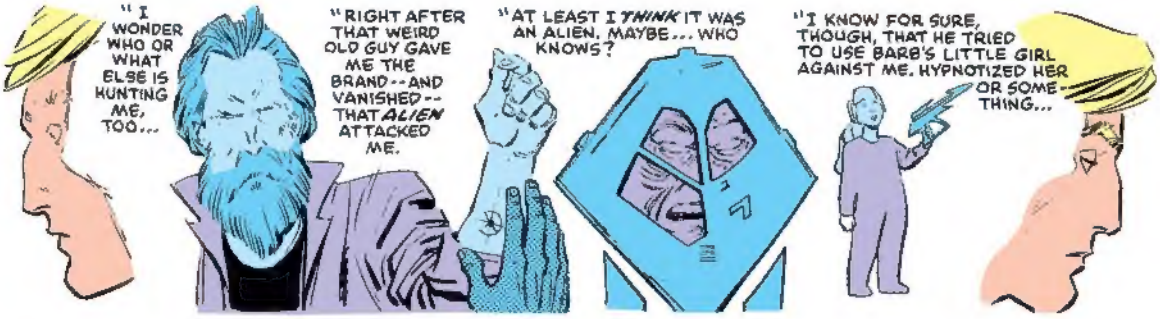

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SO EXCITED ABOUT, RICK-O. YOU GET EVEN LESS THAN I DO. HMP. COULDN'T GET MARRIED AND SUPPORT A FAMILY ON THIS.
MARRIED? FORGET THAT. THIS IS PLENTY OF BUCKS FOR GAS, PIZZA, AND GOIN' PARKIN' AT CHINAWALL. THAT'S WHAT LIFE'S ABOUT.
WHEN YOU'RE NINETEEN, MAYBE...

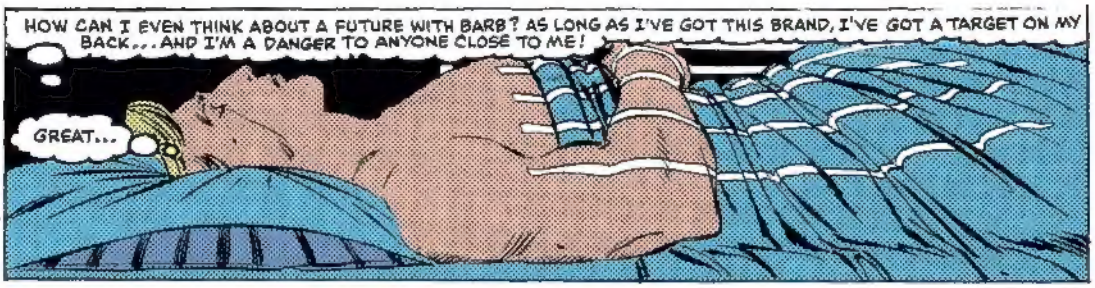

THAT NIGHT, AT KENNETH CONNELL'S WESTGATE VILLAGE APARTMENT...
FORGET ABOUT BARB. I'M NOT THE GUY SHE'S LOOKING FOR. NOT THE TYPE TO SETTLE DOWN.


SO...WHAT IS THE WILD BACHELOR DOING THIS FRIDAY NIGHT? LYING AWAKE IN BED. ALONE. STARING AT THE WALL. THINKING ABOUT HER. FEELING MY STOMACH TIGHTEN INTO A ROCK AND DO BACKFLIPS WHENEVER I THINK ABOUT HER DATE TOMORROW.
MAYBE MY BODY IS BRINGING ME A MESSAGE FROM MY SUB-CONSCIOUS--LIKE I'M NOT NINETEEN ANY-MORE. TIME TO SETTLE DOWN.
HAVE TO MAKE MORE MONEY, THOUGH. HOW?
MAYBE I CAN USE THE STAR BRAND POWER...

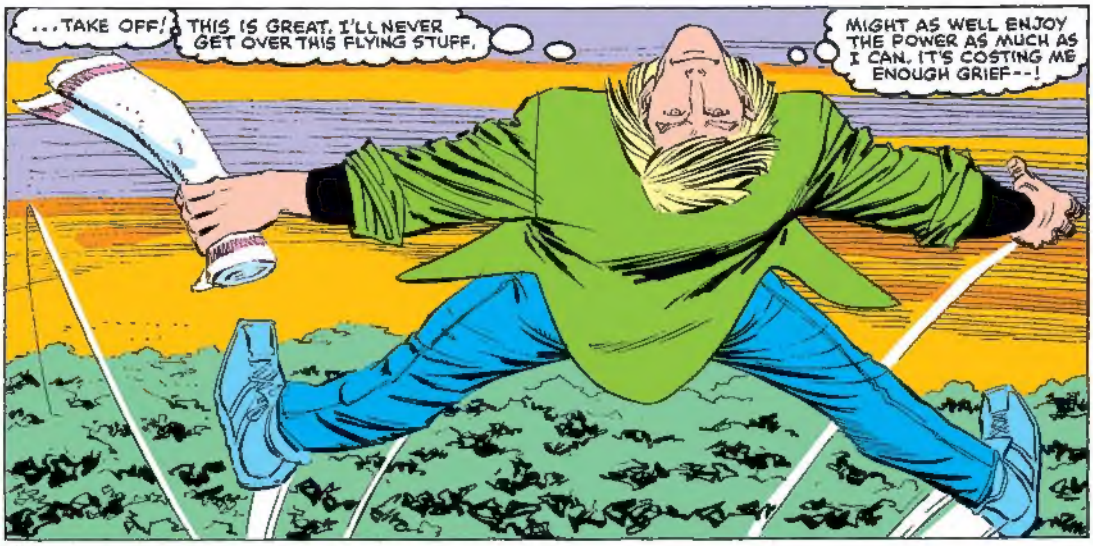
WAIT A MINUTE--!
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? I'M FORGET-TING THAT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO KNOW ABOUT THE POWER--AND WANT IT! FOREIGN AGENTS...

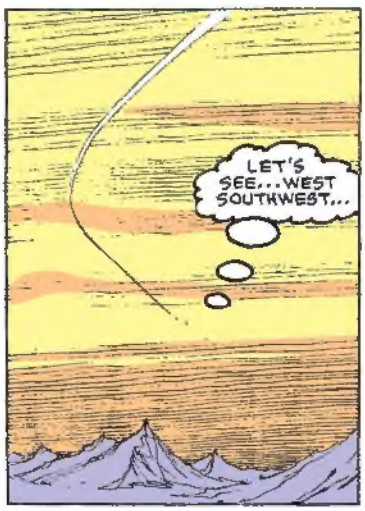
"GOOD LORD--! THE GUN I TOOK AWAY FROM THAT GIRL--MY FINGER-PRINTS MUST BE ON IT! HUH! THEY MUST BE EMBOSSED INTO IT!
"I JUST DROPPED IT--LEFT IT! WHERE WAS MY MIND?
"THEY MUST HAVE THAT GUN--AND THEY'RE STILL OUT THERE... STILL LOOKING FOR ME.

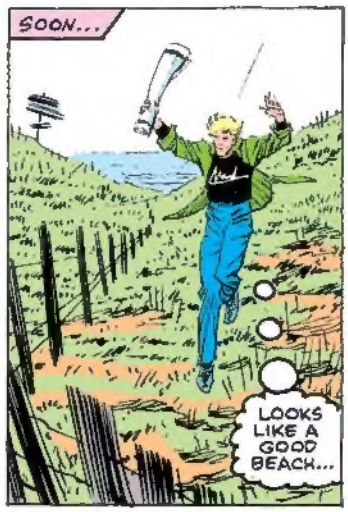

"I WONDER WHO OR WHAT ELSE IS HUNTING ME, TOO...
"RIGHT AFTER THAT WEIRD OLD GUY GAVE ME THE BRAND--AND VANISHED--THAT ALIEN ATTACKED ME.
"AT LEAST I THINK IT WAS AN ALIEN. MAYBE... WHO KNOWS?
"I KNOW FOR SURE, THOUGH, THAT HE TRIED TO USE BARB'S LITTLE GIRL AGAINST ME. HYPNOTIZED HER OR SOME-THING...


HOW CAN I EVEN THINK ABOUT A FUTURE WITH BARB? AS LONG AS I'VE GOT THIS BRAND, I'VE GOT A TARGET ON MY BACK... AND I'M A DANGER TO ANYONE CLOSE TO ME!
GREAT...

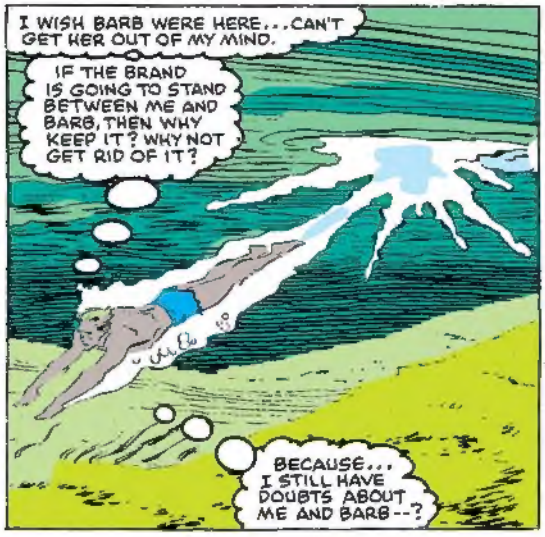
NEXT MORNING...
FAR ENOUGH, I GUESS. NO ONE CAN SEE ME...

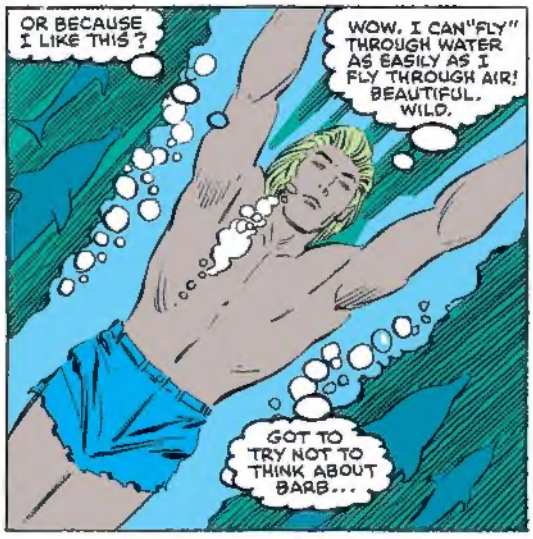

...TAKE OFF!
THIS IS GREAT. I'LL NEVER GET OVER THIS FLYING STUFF.
MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY THE POWER AS MUCH AS I CAN. IT'S COSTING ME ENOUGH GRIEF--!

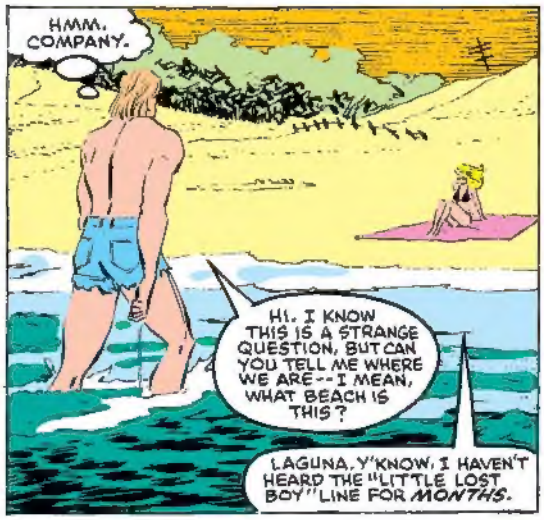

LET'S SEE...WEST SOUTHWEST...

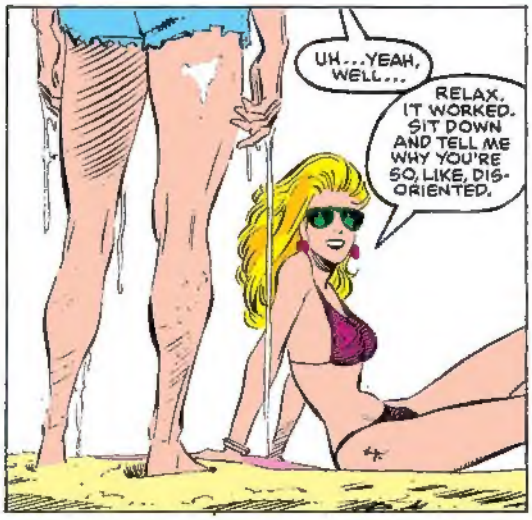

SOON...
LOOKS LIKE A GOOD BEACH...

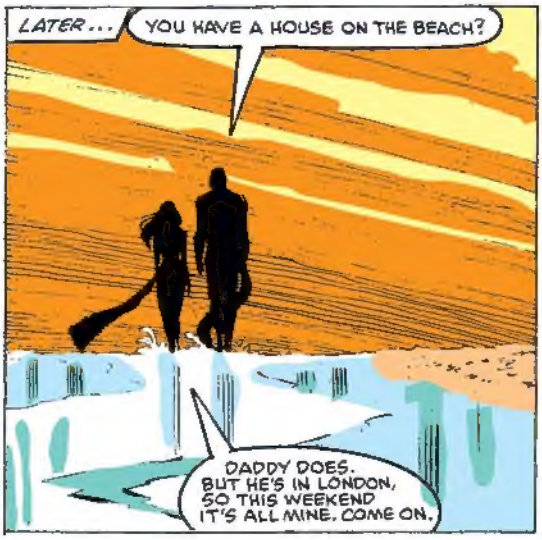
GOT IT ALL TO MYSELF. OF COURSE, IT'S ONLY ABOUT SEVEN A.M. HERE...

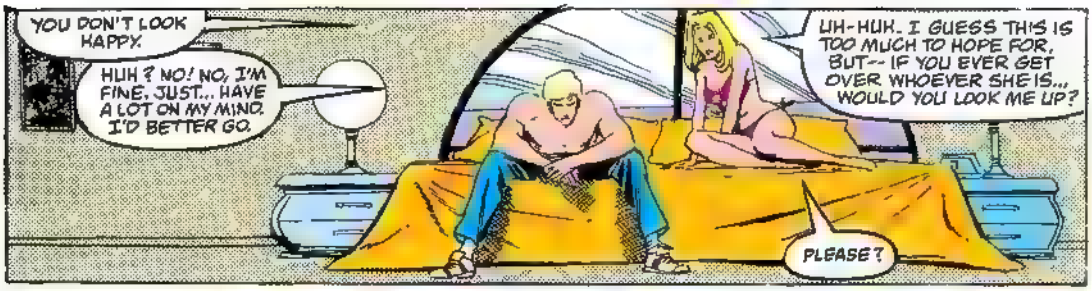

I WISH BARB WERE HERE...CAN'T GET HER OUT OF MY MIND.
IF THE BRAND IS GOING TO STAND BETWEEN ME AND BARB, THEN WHY KEEP IT? WHY NOT GET RID OF IT?
BECAUSE... I STILL HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT ME AND BARB--?

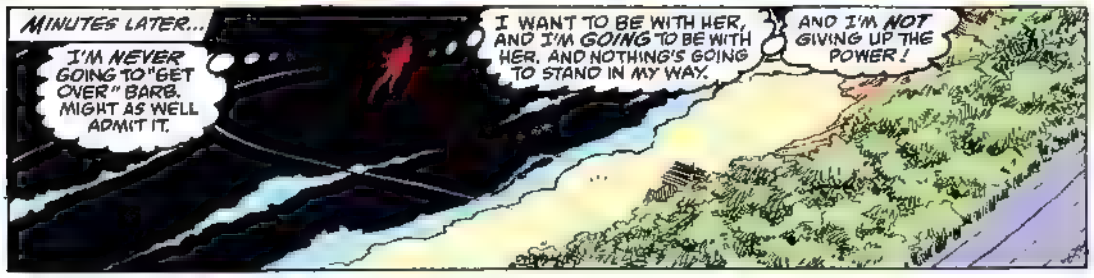

OR BECAUSE I LIKE THIS?
WOW. I CAN "FLY" THROUGH WATER AS EASILY AS I FLY THROUGH AIR! BEAUTIFUL. WILD.
GOT TO TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT BARB...


HMM. COMPANY.
HI. I KNOW THIS IS A STRANGE QUESTION, BUT CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE WE ARE--I MEAN, WHAT BEACH IS THIS?
LAGUNA. Y'KNOW, I HAVEN'T HEARD THE "LITTLE LOST BOY" LINE FOR *MONTHS*.

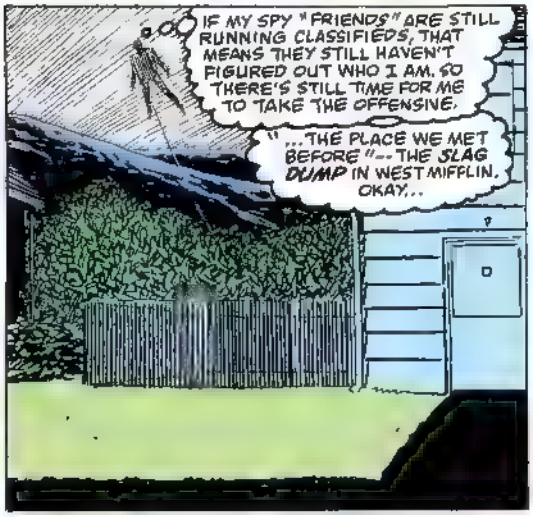

UH...YEAH, WELL...
RELAX. IT WORKED. SIT DOWN AND TELL ME WHY YOU'RE SO, LIKE, DIS-ORIENTED.

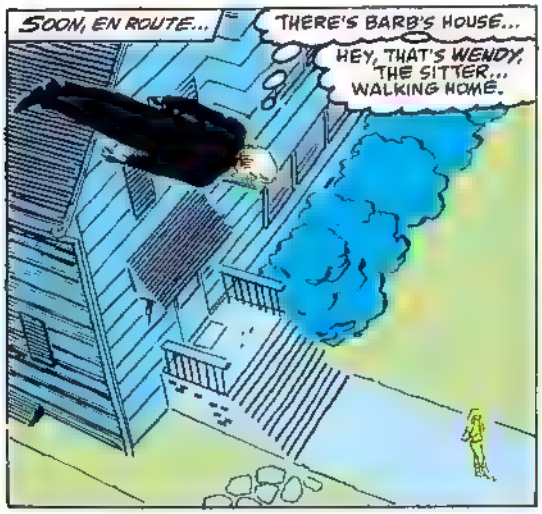

LATER...
YOU HAVE A HOUSE ON THE BEACH?
DADDY DOES. BUT HE'S IN LONDON, SO THIS WEEKEND IT'S ALL MINE. COME ON.

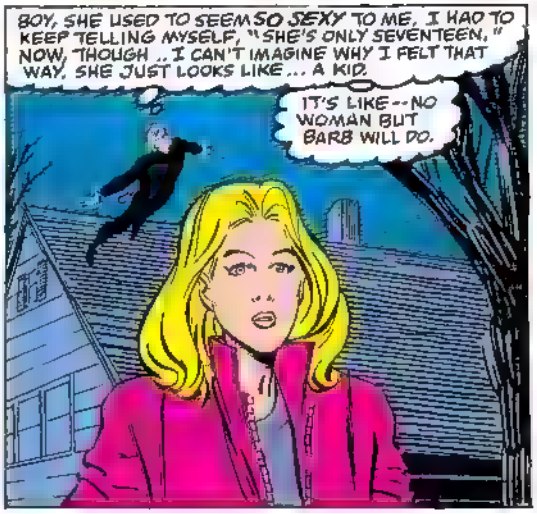

YOU DON'T LOOK HAPPY.
HUH? NO! NO, I'M FINE. JUST... HAVE A LOT ON MY MIND. I'D BETTER GO.
UH-HUH. I GUESS THIS IS TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR, BUT-- IF YOU EVER GET OVER WHOEVER SHE IS... WOULD YOU LOOK ME UP?
PLEASE?

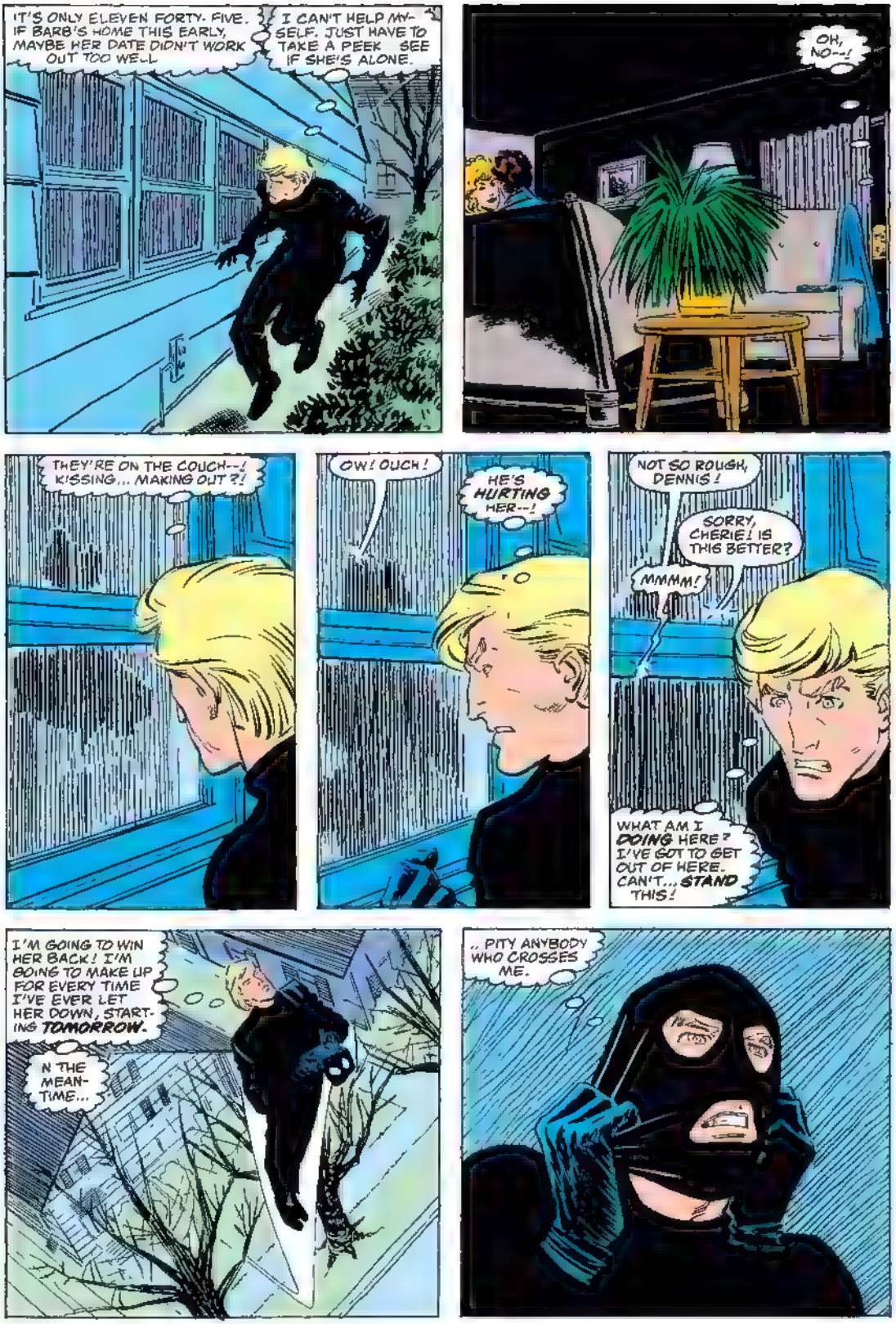

MINUTES LATER...
I'M NEVER GOING TO "GET OVER" BARB. MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT IT.
I WANT TO BE WITH HER, AND I'M GOING TO BE WITH HER. AND NOTHING'S GOING TO STAND IN MY WAY.
AND I'M NOT GIVING UP THE POWER!

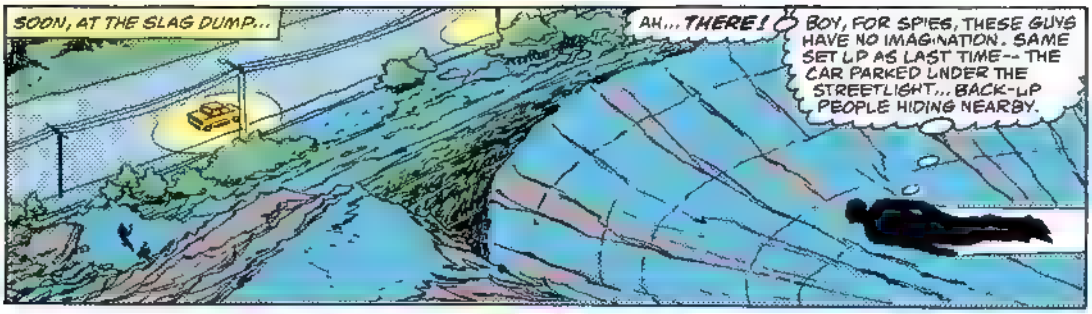
LATER...
A-HA! "FLYING MAN. I GROW WEARY OF WAITING. MEET ME TONIGHT AT THE PLACE WE MET BEFORE. CO-OPERATE AND YOU WILL BE REWARDED HANDSOMELY. FAIL TO APPEAR AND MANY INNOCENTS WILL SUFFER. DO YOU WANT THEIR BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS?"
WELL, WELL, WELL..

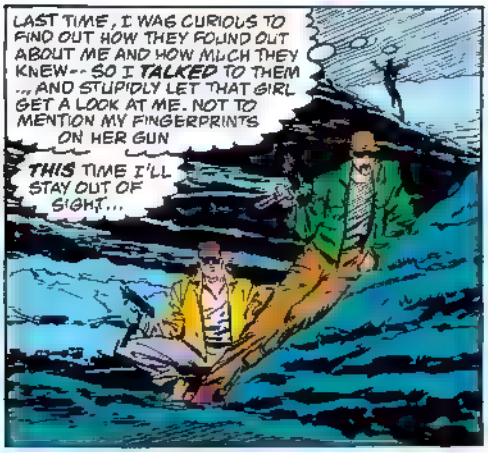

IF MY SPY "FRIENDS" ARE STILL RUNNING CLASSIFIEDS, THAT MEANS THEY STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT WHO I AM. SO THERE'S STILL TIME FOR ME TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE.
"...THE PLACE WE MET BEFORE"-- THE SLAG DUMP IN WEST MIFFLIN. OKAY...

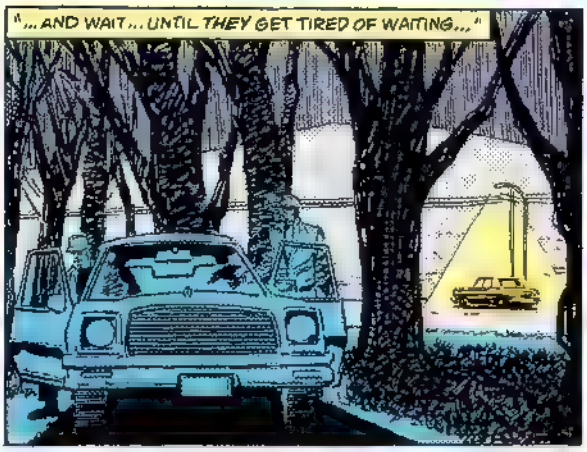

SOON, EN ROUTE...
THERE'S BARB'S HOUSE...
HEY, THAT'S WENDY, THE SITTER... WALKING HOME.


BOY, SHE USED TO SEEM SO SEXY TO ME. I HAD TO KEEP TELLING MYSELF, "SHE'S ONLY SEVENTEEN." NOW, THOUGH.. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY I FELT THAT WAY. SHE JUST LOOKS LIKE... A KID.
IT'S LIKE-- NO WOMAN BUT BARB WILL DO.


IT'S ONLY ELEVEN FORTY-FIVE. IF BARB'S HOME THIS EARLY, MAYBE HER DATE DIDN'T WORK OUT TOO WELL.
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF. JUST HAVE TO TAKE A PEEK. SEE IF SHE'S ALONE.
OH, NO--!
THEY'RE ON THE COUCH--! KISSING... MAKING OUT?!
OW! OUCH!
HE'S HURTING HER--!
NOT SO ROUGH, DENNIS!
SORRY, CHERIE! IS THIS BETTER?
MMMM!
WHAT AM I DOING HERE? I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE. CAN'T... STAND THIS!
I'M GOING TO WIN HER BACK! I'M GOING TO MAKE UP FOR EVERY TIME I'VE EVER LET HER DOWN, STARTING TOMORROW.
N THE MEAN-TIME...
.. PITY ANYBODY WHO CROSSES ME.


SOON, AT THE SLAG DUMP...
AH... THERE!
BOY, FOR SPIES, THESE GUYS HAVE NO IMAGINATION. SAME SET UP AS LAST TIME-- THE CAR PARKED UNDER THE STREETLIGHT... BACK-UP PEOPLE HIDING NEARBY.

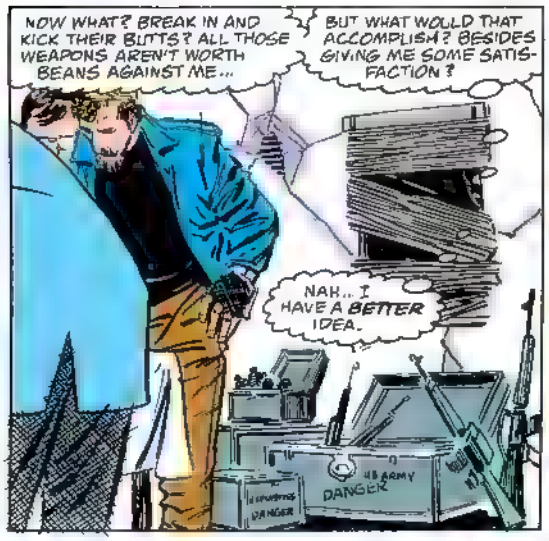

LAST TIME, I WAS CURIOUS TO FIND OUT HOW THEY FOUND OUT ABOUT ME AND HOW MUCH THEY KNEW-- SO I TALKED TO THEM ...AND STUPIDLY LET THAT GIRL GET A LOOK AT ME. NOT TO MENTION MY FINGERPRINTS ON HER GUN
THIS TIME I'LL STAY OUT OF SIGHT...

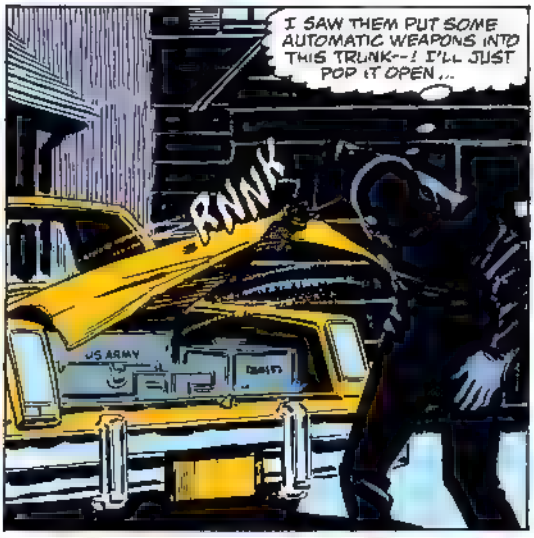

"... AND WAIT... UNTIL THEY GET TIRED OF WAITING..."

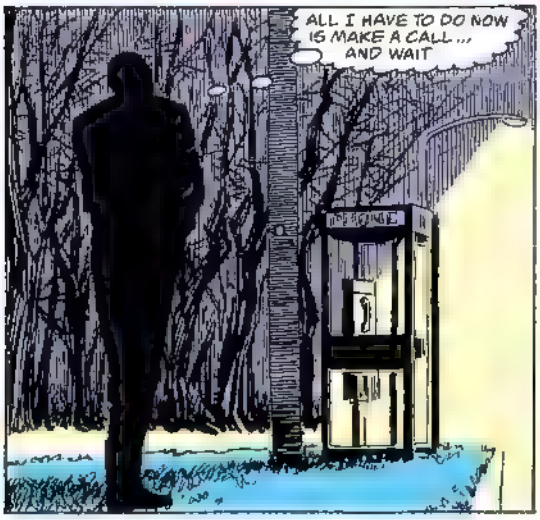
...AND FOLLOW THEM TO THEIR LAIR

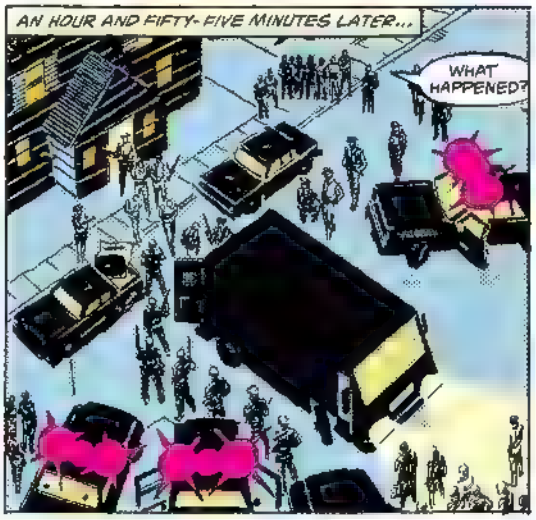
AND, IN OAKLAND...
A STUDENT RESIDENCE...

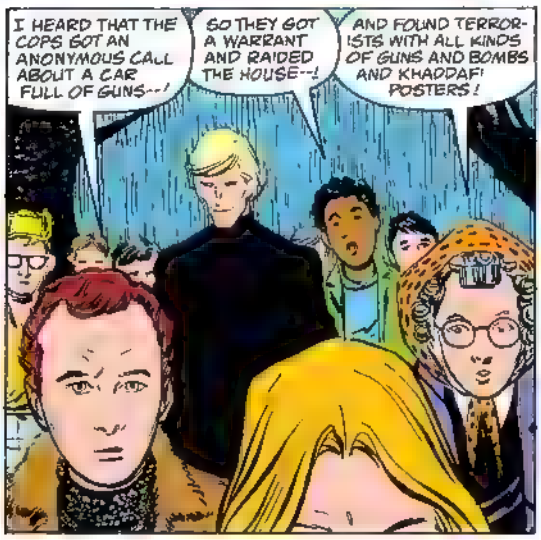
THEY LOOK... MID-EASTERN. LIKE THE GIRL DID. WISH I COULD UNDERSTAND WHATEVER LANGUAGE THEY'RE SPEAKING.
I DOUBT THAT THEY'RE DISCUSSING THE FALL FLOWER SHOW AT PHIPPS CONSERVATORY, THOUGH...

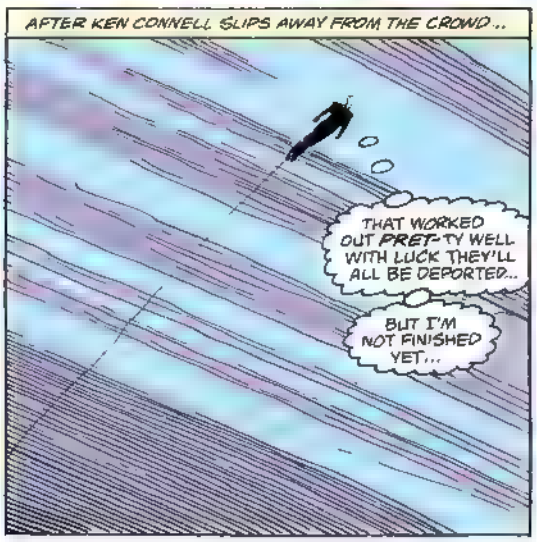

NOW WHAT? BREAK IN AND KICK THEIR BUTTS? ALL THOSE WEAPONS AREN'T WORTH BEANS AGAINST ME...
BUT WHAT WOULD THAT ACCOMPLISH? BESIDES GIVING ME SOME SATISFACTION?
NAH... I HAVE A BETTER IDEA.
US ARMY
DANGER


I SAW THEM PUT SOME AUTOMATIC WEAPONS INTO THIS TRUNK--! I'LL JUST POP IT OPEN...
RNNK
US ARMY

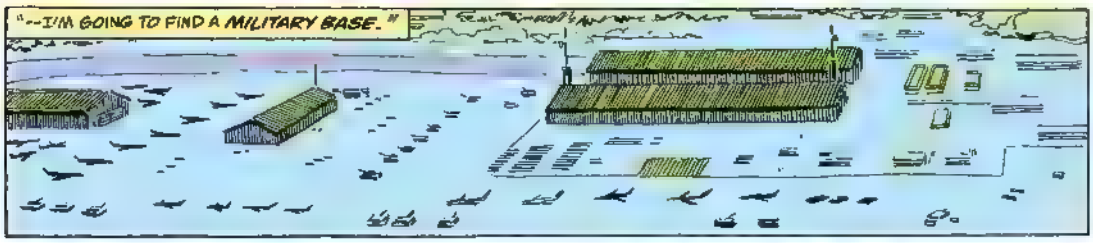

ALL I HAVE TO DO NOW IS MAKE A CALL... AND WAIT

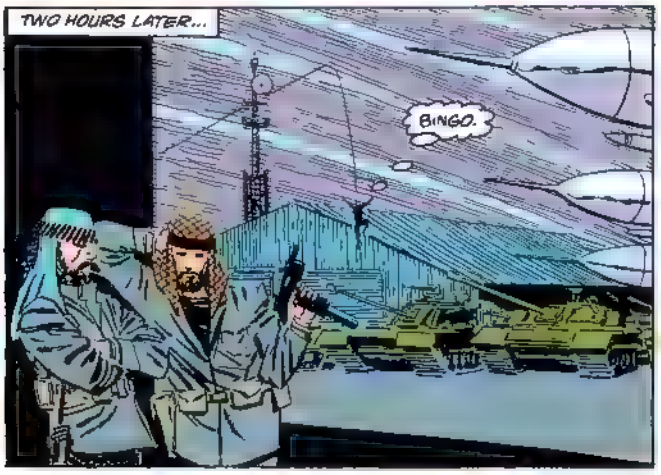

AN HOUR AND FIFTY-FIVE MINUTES LATER...
WHAT HAPPENED?


I HEARD THAT THE COPS GOT AN ANONYMOUS CALL ABOUT A CAR FULL OF GUNS--!
SO THEY GOT A WARRANT AND RAIDED THE HOUSE--!
AND FOUND TERRORISTS WITH ALL KINDS OF GUNS AND BOMBS AND KHADDAFI POSTERS!

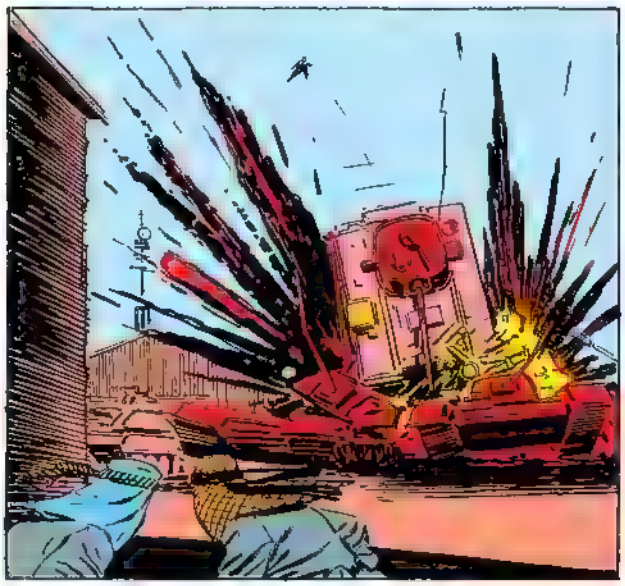

AFTER KEN CONNELL SLIPS AWAY FROM THE CROWD...
THAT WORKED OUT PRETTY WELL WITH LUCK THEY'LL ALL BE DEPORTED...
BUT I'M NOT FINISHED YET...

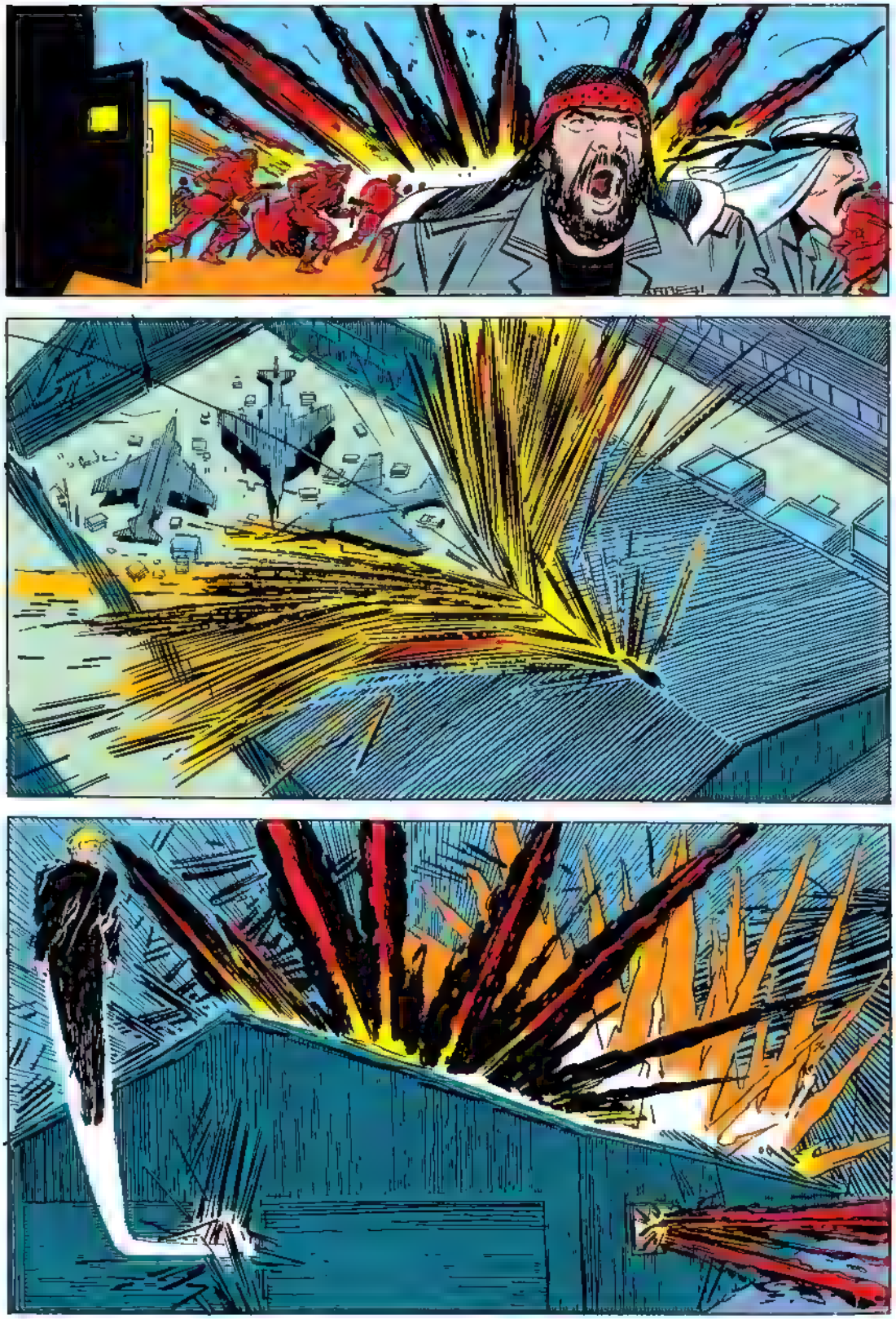
AND, AT SEVEN P.M. SUNDAY EVENING, PITTSBURGH TIME--
--KEN CONNELL IS SEVERAL THOUSAND MILES EAST OF PITTSBURGH...
I THINK I'M OVER LIBYA.. YEAH, I MUST BE NOW TO FIND A TARGET...
THAT... IS NOT GOING TO BE EASY ESPECIALLY IN THE DARK. BUT IF IT TAKES ALL NIGHT...

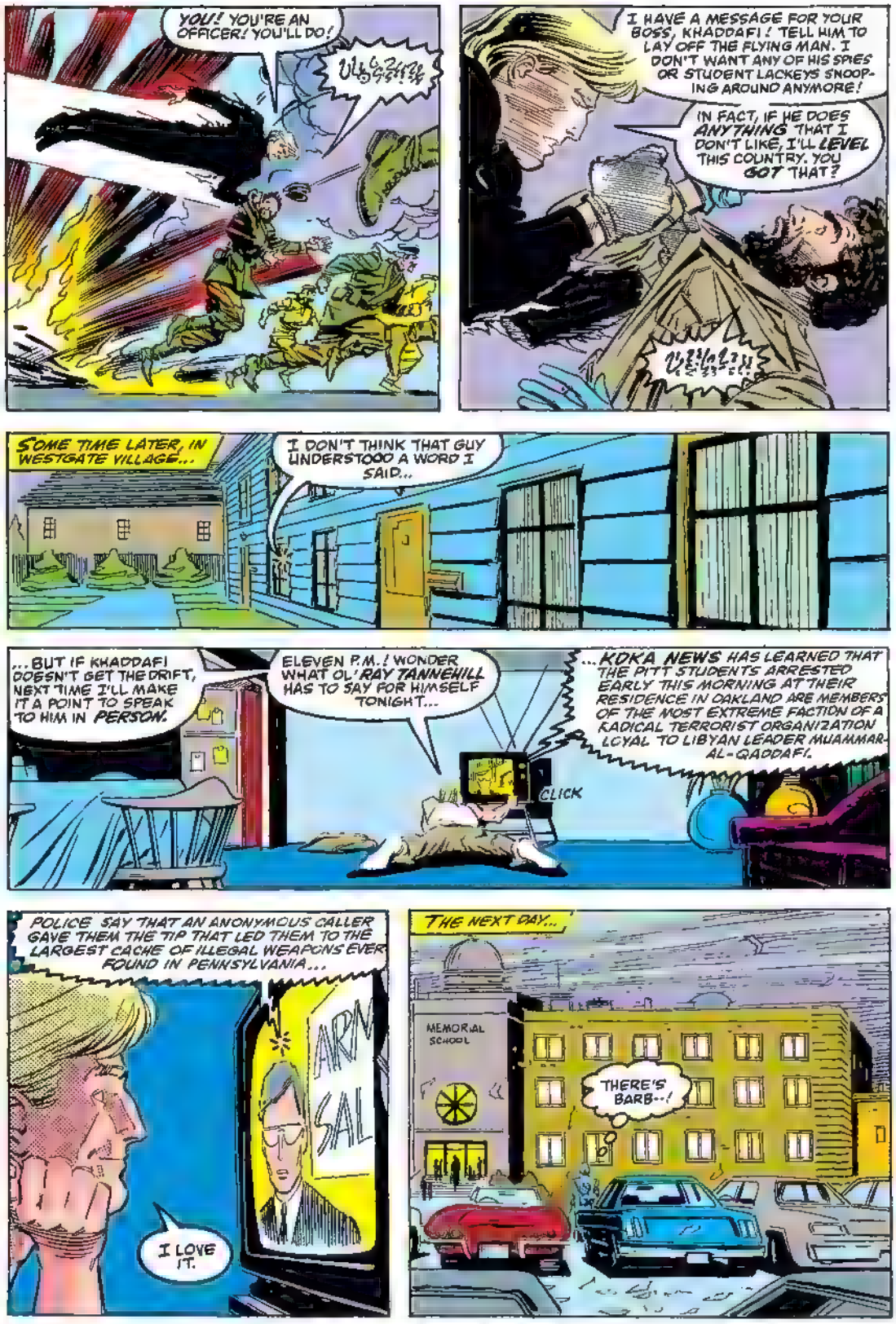

"--I'M GOING TO FIND A MILITARY BASE."

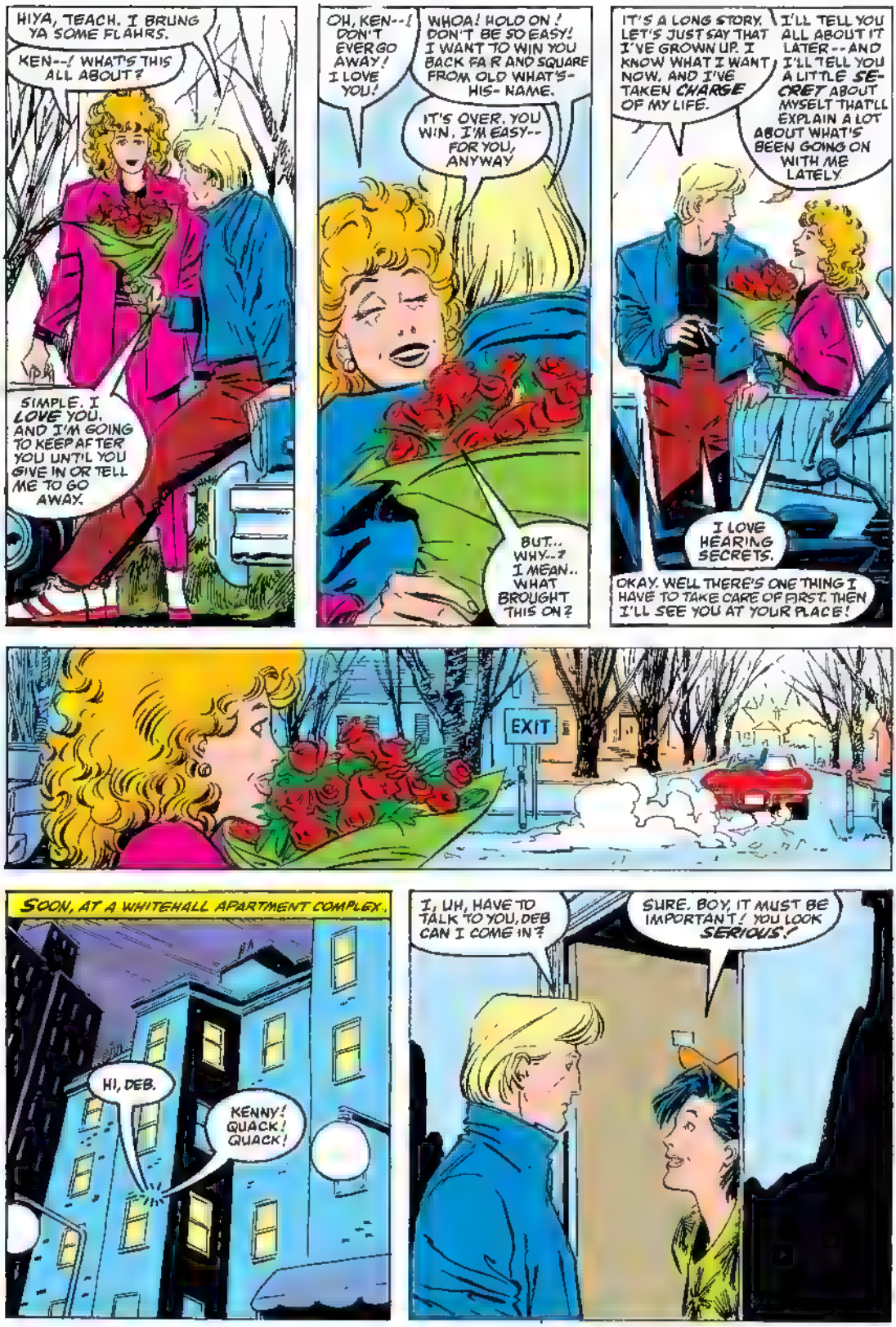

TWO HOURS LATER...
BINGO.

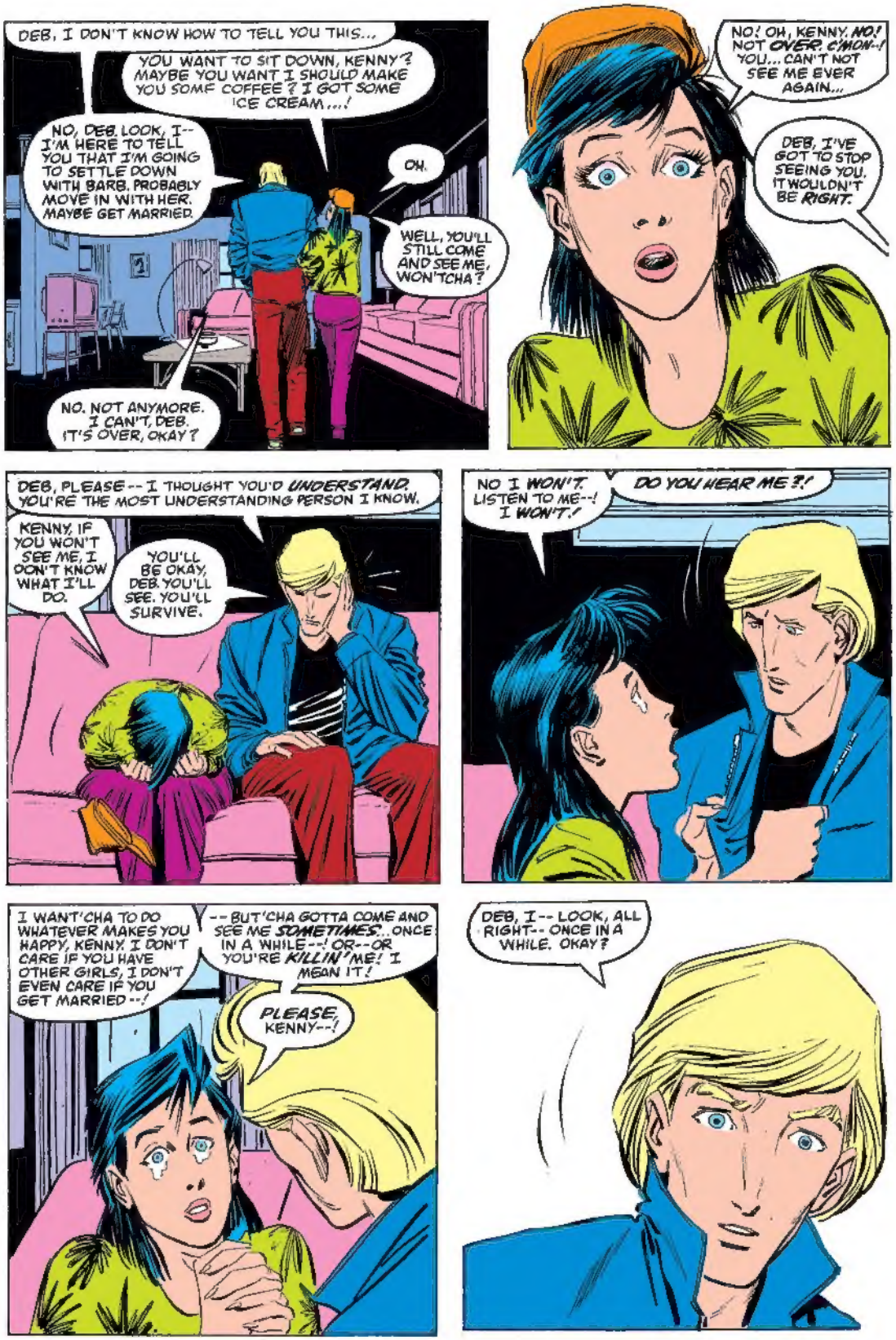
THIS IS GOING TO BE FUN.

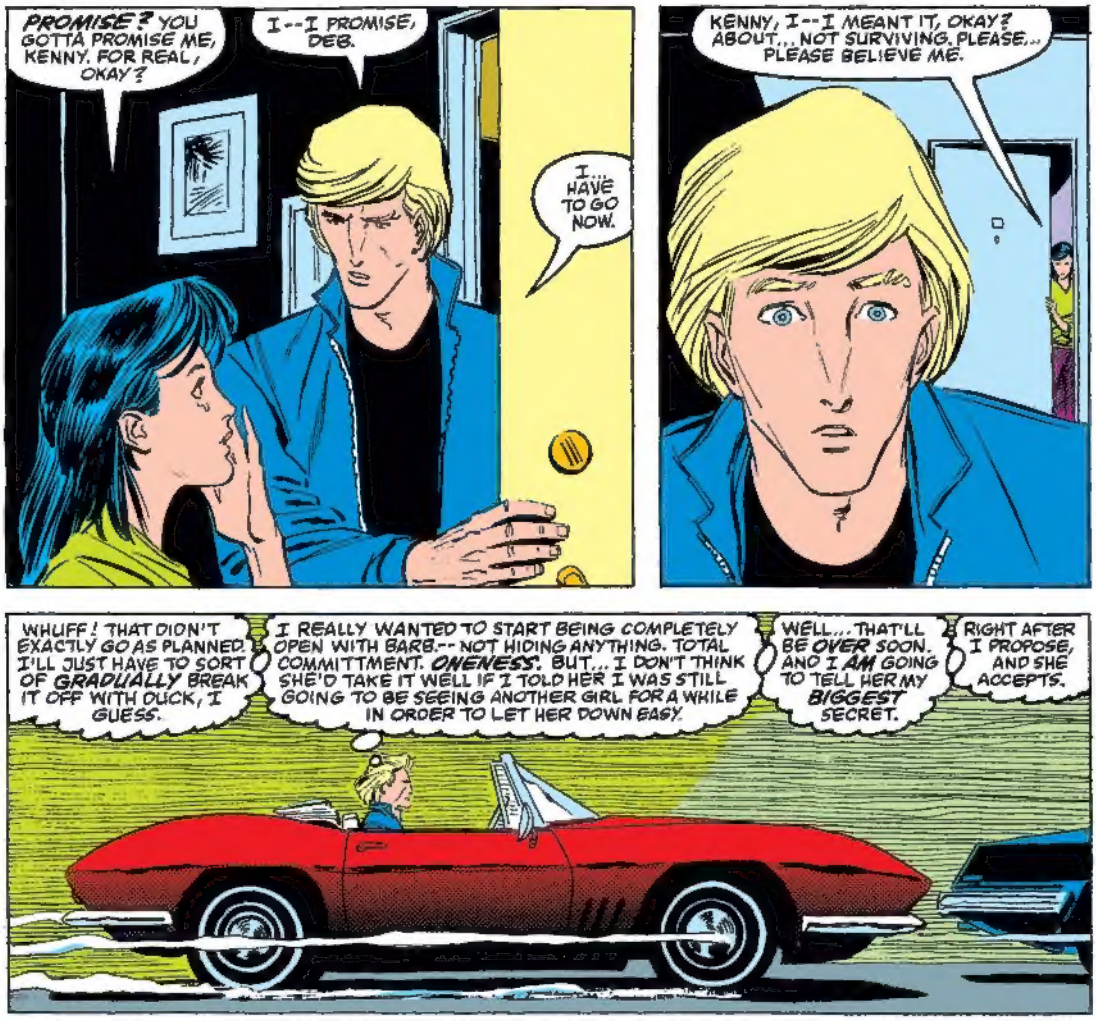


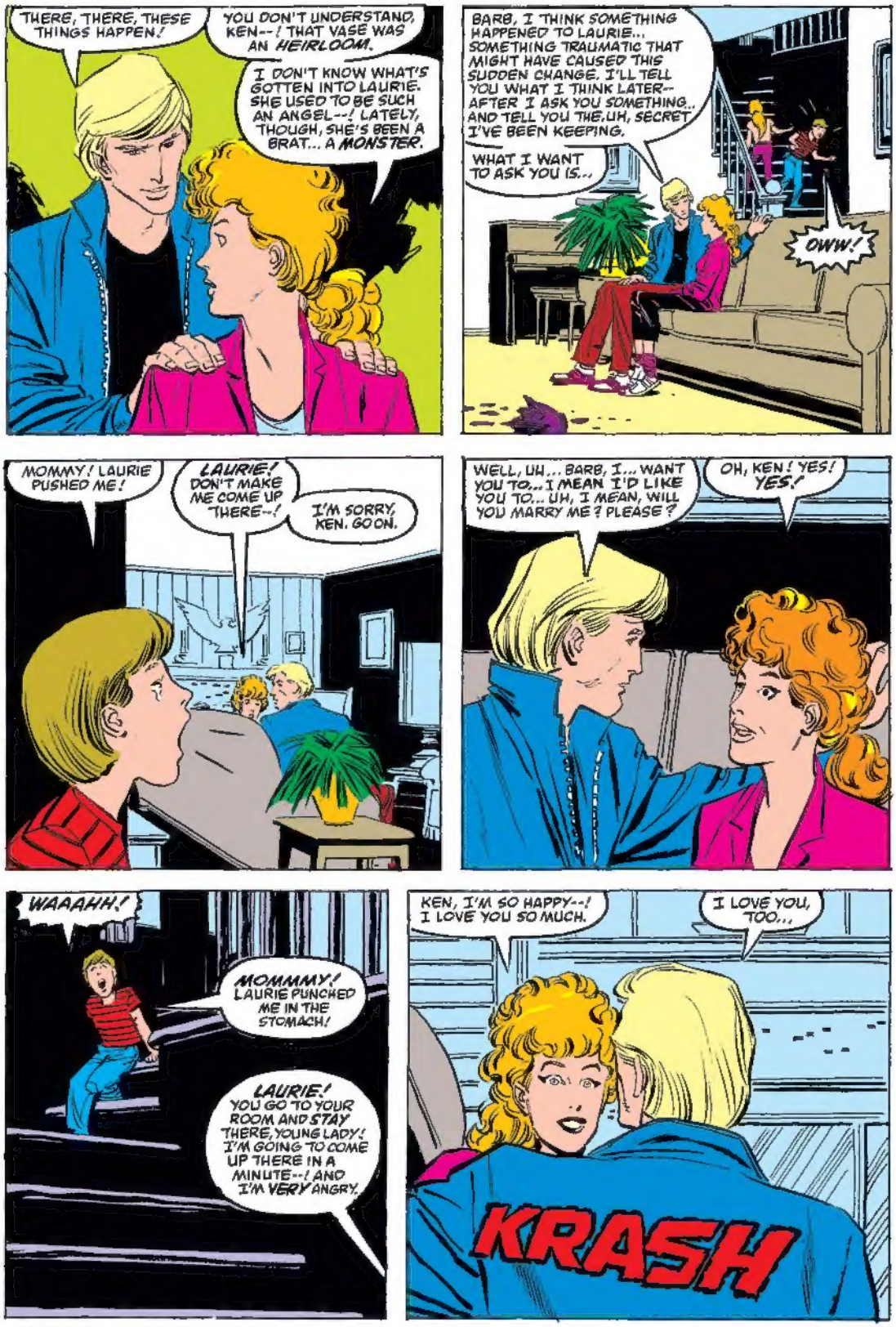



YOU! YOU'RE AN OFFICER! YOU'LL DO!
I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOUR BOSS, KHADDAFI! TELL HIM TO LAY OFF THE FLYING MAN. I DON'T WANT ANY OF HIS SPIES OR STUDENT LACKEYS SNOOPING AROUND ANYMORE!
IN FACT, IF HE DOES ANYTHING THAT I DON'T LIKE, I'LL LEVEL THIS COUNTRY. YOU GOT THAT?
SOME TIME LATER, IN WESTGATE VILLAGE...
I DON'T THINK THAT GUY UNDERSTOOD A WORD I SAID...
...BUT IF KHADDAFI DOESN'T GET THE DRIFT, NEXT TIME I'LL MAKE IT A POINT TO SPEAK TO HIM IN PERSON.
ELEVEN P.M.! I WONDER WHAT OL' RAY TANNEHILL HAS TO SAY FOR HIMSELF TONIGHT...
CLICK
...KDKA NEWS HAS LEARNED THAT THE PITT STUDENTS ARRESTED EARLY THIS MORNING AT THEIR RESIDENCE IN OAKLAND ARE MEMBERS OF THE MOST EXTREME FACTION OF A RADICAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATION LOYAL TO LIBYAN LEADER MUAMMAR AL-QADDAFI.
POLICE SAY THAT AN ANONYMOUS CALLER GAVE THEM THE TIP THAT LED THEM TO THE LARGEST CACHE OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS EVER FOUND IN PENNSYLVANIA...
ARM SAL
I LOVE IT.
THE NEXT DAY...
MEMORIAL SCHOOL
THERE'S BARB--!

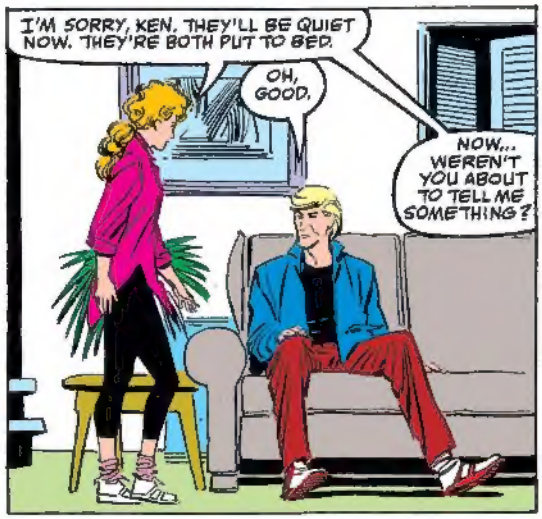

HIYA, TEACH. I BRUNG YA SOME FLAHRS.
KEN--! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
SIMPLE. I LOVE YOU, AND I'M GOING TO KEEP AFTER YOU UNTIL YOU GIVE IN OR TELL ME TO GO AWAY.
OH, KEN--! DON'T EVER GO AWAY! I LOVE YOU!
WHOA! HOLD ON! DON'T BE SO EASY! I WANT TO WIN YOU BACK FAIR AND SQUARE FROM OLD WHAT'S-HIS-NAME.
IT'S OVER. YOU WIN. I'M EASY--FOR YOU, ANYWAY
BUT.. WHY--? I MEAN.. WHAT BROUGHT THIS ON?
IT'S A LONG STORY. LET'S JUST SAY THAT I'VE GROWN UP. I KNOW WHAT I WANT NOW, AND I'VE TAKEN CHARGE OF MY LIFE.
I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT LATER--AND I'LL TELL YOU A LITTLE SECRET ABOUT MYSELF THAT'LL EXPLAIN A LOT ABOUT WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON WITH ME LATELY.
I LOVE HEARING SECRETS.
OKAY. WELL THERE'S ONE THING I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF FIRST. THEN I'LL SEE YOU AT YOUR PLACE!
EXIT
SOON, AT A WHITEHALL APARTMENT COMPLEX.
HI, DEB.
KENNY! QUACK! QUACK!
I, UH, HAVE TO TALK TO YOU, DEB CAN I COME IN?
SURE. BOY, IT MUST BE IMPORTANT! YOU LOOK SERIOUS!


DEB, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU THIS...
YOU WANT TO SIT DOWN, KENNY? MAYBE YOU WANT I SHOULD MAKE YOU SOME COFFEE? I GOT SOME ICE CREAM...!
NO, DEB. LOOK, I-- I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT I'M GOING TO SETTLE DOWN WITH BARB. PROBABLY MOVE IN WITH HER. MAYBE GET MARRIED.
OH.
WELL, YOU'LL STILL COME AND SEE ME, WON'TCHA?
NO. NOT ANYMORE. I CAN'T, DEB. IT'S OVER, OKAY?
NO! OH, KENNY, NO! NOT OVER. C'MON--! YOU... CAN'T NOT SEE ME EVER AGAIN...
DEB, I'VE GOT TO STOP SEEING YOU. IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT.
DEB, PLEASE -- I THOUGHT YOU'D UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE THE MOST UNDERSTANDING PERSON I KNOW.
KENNY, IF YOU WON'T SEE ME, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL DO.
YOU'LL BE OKAY, DEB. YOU'LL SEE. YOU'LL SURVIVE.
NO I WON'T. LISTEN TO ME--! I WON'T.!
DO YOU HEAR ME?!
I WANT'CHA TO DO WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY, KENNY. I DON'T CARE IF YOU HAVE OTHER GIRLS, I DON'T EVEN CARE IF YOU GET MARRIED --!
-- BUT'CHA GOTTA COME AND SEE ME SOMETIMES.. ONCE IN A WHILE --! OR-- OR YOU'RE KILLIN' ME! I MEAN IT!
PLEASE, KENNY--!
DEB, I-- LOOK, ALL RIGHT-- ONCE IN A WHILE. OKAY?

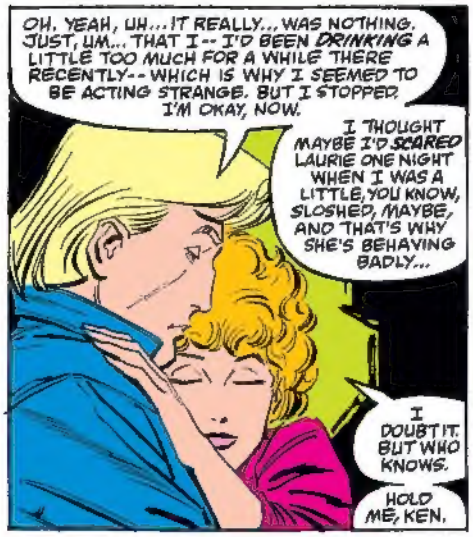

PROMISE? YOU GOTTA PROMISE ME, KENNY. FOR REAL, OKAY?
I--I PROMISE, DEB.
I... HAVE TO GO NOW.
KENNY, I--I MEANT IT, OKAY? ABOUT... NOT SURVIVING. PLEASE... PLEASE BELIEVE ME.
WHUFF! THAT DION'T EXACTLY GO AS PLANNED. I'LL JUST HAVE TO SORT OF GRADUALLY BREAK IT OFF WITH DUCK, I GUESS.
I REALLY WANTED TO START BEING COMPLETELY OPEN WITH BARB-- NOT HIDING ANYTHING. TOTAL COMMITTMENT. ONENESS. BUT... I DON'T THINK SHE'D TAKE IT WELL IF I TOLD HER I WAS STILL GOING TO BE SEEING ANOTHER GIRL FOR A WHILE IN ORDER TO LET HER DOWN EASY.
WELL... THAT'LL BE OVER SOON. AND I AM GOING TO TELL HER MY BIGGEST SECRET.
RIGHT AFTER I PROPOSE, AND SHE ACCEPTS.
SHORTLY...
MAN, I AM SO EXCITED! THIS IS A DREAM COMING TRUE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I JUST SAID THAT TO MYSELF-- BUT RIGHT NOW EVERY CORNY LYRIC FROM EVERY CORNY ROMANTIC SONG EVER WRITTEN SUDDENLY MAKES PERFECT SENSE TO ME.
BARB! I'M HERE!
...FURIOUS WITH YOU! LAURIE, THAT VASE WAS MY GRANDMOTHER'S! NOW YOU GO RIGHT TO YOUR ROOM!

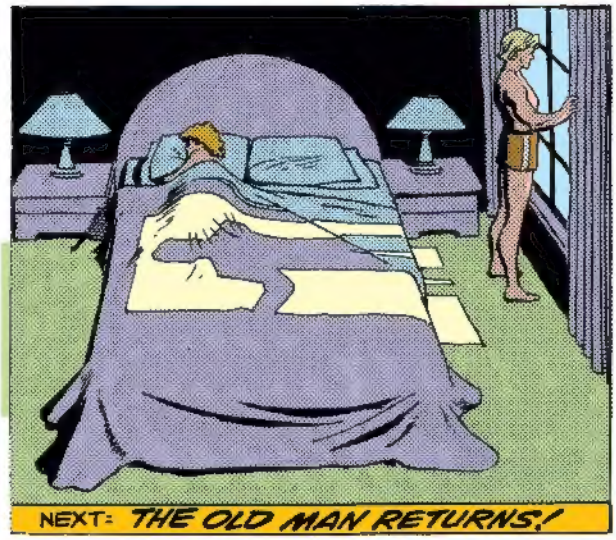

THERE, THERE, THESE THINGS HAPPEN!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, KEN--! THAT VASE WAS AN HEIRLOOM.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO LAURIE. SHE USED TO BE SUCH AN ANGEL--! LATELY, THOUGH, SHE'S BEEN A BRAT... A MONSTER.
BARB, I THINK SOMETHING HAPPENED TO LAURIE... SOMETHING TRAUMATIC THAT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED THIS SUDDEN CHANGE. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I THINK LATER-- AFTER I ASK YOU SOMETHING... AND TELL YOU THE UH, SECRET I'VE BEEN KEEPING.
WHAT I WANT TO ASK YOU IS...
OWW!
MOMMY! LAURIE PUSHED ME!
LAURIE! DON'T MAKE ME COME UP THERE--!
I'M SORRY, KEN. GO ON.
WELL, UH... BARB, I... WANT YOU TO... I MEAN I'D LIKE YOU TO... UH, I MEAN, WILL YOU MARRY ME? PLEASE?
OH, KEN! YES! YES!
WAAAHH!
MOMMMY! LAURIE PUNCHED ME IN THE STOMACH!
LAURIE! YOU GO TO YOUR ROOM AND STAY THERE, YOUNG LADY! I'M GOING TO COME UP THERE IN A MINUTE--! AND I'M VERY ANGRY.
KEN, I'M SO HAPPY--! I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.
I LOVE YOU, TOO...
KRASH

THAT'S IT! I'VE HAD IT WITH YOU TONIGHT, LAURIE!


I'M SORRY, KEN. THEY'LL BE QUIET NOW. THEY'RE BOTH PUT TO BED.
OH, GOOD.
NOW... WEREN'T YOU ABOUT TO TELL ME SOMETHING?

I WAS?
SOME BIG SECRET? AND SOMETHING ABOUT LAURIE...


OH, YEAH, UH... IT REALLY... WAS NOTHING. JUST, UM... THAT I -- I'D BEEN DRINKING A LITTLE TOO MUCH FOR A WHILE THERE RECENTLY -- WHICH IS WHY I SEEMED TO BE ACTING STRANGE. BUT I STOPPED. I'M OKAY, NOW.
I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D SCARED LAURIE ONE NIGHT WHEN I WAS A LITTLE, YOU KNOW, SLOSHED, MAYBE, AND THAT'S WHY SHE'S BEHAVING BADLY...
I DOUBT IT. BUT WHO KNOWS.
HOLD ME, KEN.


NEXT: THE OLD MAN RETURNS!